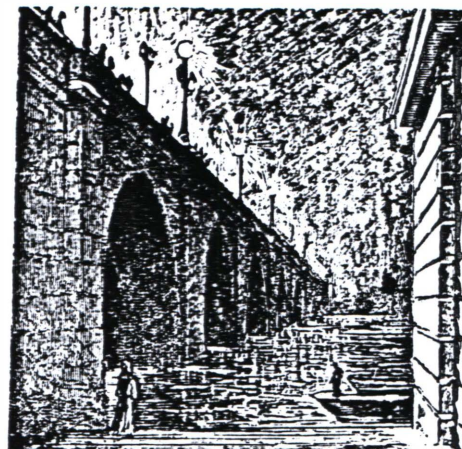


slide

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S L I D I N G S number 2 : January 1991

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The SLI effect is real : it is hard to reach any other conclusion after reading the accounts sent by dozens of respondents to SLIDE. That doesn't mean we know what is happening (though as you will read in this bulletin, we are beginning to put some ideas together). What it does mean is that we are not chasing an illusion : this is an experience which many people have. Even if it should turn out that there is no cause-and-effect link between the witness and the event (though that doesn't seem likely) the fact that so many people believe there is a link would itself be something worth investigating.

The one thing that comes out loud and clear, from letter after letter, is the relief SLIders feel at finding they are not alone - that this is something which happens to others. Don Inks of Taylor, Michigan : 'I can't tell you how much relief I've felt since hearing others have experienced this sort of "happening" in their lives also'. Karen Parker of Statesville, North Carolina : 'For years nobody believed me when I told them I put out lights. Eventually, I got a few people to believe me because they were around enough when it happened'. Thomas Meketa of Plano, Texas : 'I thought I was the only one to ever experience this. I was beginning to even doubt that the things that have happened to me were really true or just coincidence'.

Bernard Lory of Paris heard me speak of it on French radio : 'I just happened to listen to you speaking on France Culture. You mentioned the phenomenon you call 'street lamp interference'. I was surprised to learn this phenomenon is experienced by other people, that it has a name, and that somebody is working on it.'

Indeed, yes, we are working on it. The people who have responded to news of the Project are mostly people who have experienced the phenomenon, but also people who are intrigued by the possibility that here, almost unnoticed among the everyday experiences of ordinary people, is a phenomenon which could throw revealing light - if that's the appropriate phrase - on many accounts of alleged interaction between ourselves and our environment.

What happens ?

The stories told by people who have responded to SLIDE are so varied, it seems they have only one thing in common : street lamps go out. From then on, there are so many variations that it's difficult to draw any clear parameters.

We have only limited space in this bulletin, so I can give you only a few examples, and only in bare outline : more cases and more detailed accounts must wait until a full report is prepared.

Ronald Brown, of Woodinville, Washington : 'I was once stopped in a major city by police officers, who wanted to know what I was doing to the city street lights ? They had observed that as I turned onto a lighted street, each and every lamp went out as my car reached within 10 feet (3 metres) of it. I looked back and nearly six lights or 1½ city blocks of street lamps were darkened ! The police searched my entire car and me before allowing me to leave. As I drove away down the street, the oncoming street lamps extinguished just before my car reached each pole. The police stopped me again and asked me not to drive down that street again until they had the lights checked out'.

Yvonne Bajwa, of Ventura, California, has had several SLI experiences : 'These episodes are quite common now and I have made the following observations :

- # the time of night doesn't seem to matter
- # the type of car I'm driving doesn't seem to matter
- # I don't even have to be driving - the same thing has happened while I am a passenger
- # the lights always turn off, have never had one turn on
- # have never turned off more than one at a time
- # the light never turns off as I approach, but rather after I pass under it
- # have never had a light turn off by walking under it (but I don't walk much at night)'

Here we have someone who has got so far as analysing her experiences - yet some of her findings are in total contradiction to what others report !

Off, on, or both ?

Most SLIders, like Yvonne, only turn lamps off, but **Lester Lomax** of Corona, California, reports 'sometimes lights that were out, in a row that was mostly lit, would go on'. **Michael Freie** of San Jose, California, has sometimes turned them on, though mostly off. **Jon Foy** of Yonkers, New York, and **Bruce Wilson** of Rohnert Park, California, both seem to turn them off if they're on, on if they're off, with equal facility. This is compatible with Ronald Brown's analysis, presented later in this bulletin.

How frequently does SLI occur ?

It seems that SLIders fall into three categories in this respect :

- 1 - those who live with such experiences more or less continuously
- 2 - those who have it happen only intermittently
- 3 - those who have it happen maybe only once and never again.

Gwen Mangan of Brooklyn, New York, has been experiencing SLI for 18 years, since the age of 14. **Mary Anderson** of Minneapolis : 'several times a year

since 1983' Joan Croft of Round Rock, Texas : 'At least 140+ in the past year and a half'. Joseph Langan of Cheektowaga, New York : 'hundreds over a period of 14 years'. Bill Stack of New York City, a response agent for an alarm company, says SLI has occurred 'countless times' when he responds to silent alarm calls and after parking his car is walking to the building.

On the other hand, John Spencer, of Harpenden, England, has had only a few, widely-spaced SLI incidents : Richard Francis of Reno, Nevada, had several incidents, but all during just the one two-week period, and clearly associated with a specific experience.

We'll be doing a statistical breakdown of these figures, but with such variations, I can't imagine what they'll tell us, if anything !

What types of lamp ?

Mercury vapour, say Mary Anderson ; so does Eric Warp of Fair Oaks, California. Sodium, says Richard Francis ; Dean Slawson of Oxnard, California, thinks his SLI effects are only on sodium, and not on mercury lamps. Phill Shaw of Alexandria, Virginia : 'The effect occurs most often with the orange (sodium-halide?) lights'.

How distant are the lamps from the person ?

Yet again, reports vary tremendously. Probably a majority say SLI occurs when the person passes beneath the lamp, but we have almost as many cases like that of Ronald McFaddin of Huntington Park, California, who says 'the street light effect can happen to me while directly under the light or upwards of 50 to 100 yards (50-100m) away'. And of course there are the multiple cases when several lights, at varying distances from the individual, go out together.

How long does the effect last ?

SLIders don't usually stay around long enough to see when the lamps come on again, though they are generally reported as functioning ok the next day. Some say they come on again very soon after : when Clayton Johnson of Normal, Illinois, stopped at a highway rest stop with his mother, 'the light above us went out. When we had come out of the restrooms, the light was back on again. So I walked toward the light and it went out again. We spent about 25 minutes individually walking toward the light pole and it went out every time on both of us. We stayed around and watched other people walk under it, but nobody else had an effect on it'.

However, some SLIders affect the lamps for longer ; Craig Patterson of Evergreen, Colorado, says of one lamp 'it is off for about a week until the highway department fixes it, then I put it out again'.

Herbe Smith of Los Angeles offers yet another variation : he sometimes dims lights rather than extinguishes them ; 'sometimes they will re-ignite shortly after I have passed under them and at other times I will look back and they still haven't relit'.

The implication is that the SLI effect is not on the lamp as such, but on the status of the lamp, as brought about either by switching or by the state of the components. Ronald Brown's hypothesis, discussed later in this bulletin, bears this out. However, it is directly contradictory to some of the incidents reported in the next section...

Experiences with other appliances

Probably a majority of SLIders have experiences with other kinds of light, other electrical appliances, sometimes even with NON-electrical appliances. (Gwen Mangan, and Teri Mudey of Carlsbad, California, are two of several who mention trouble with watches ; Teri specifically indicates that they are 'wind-style' watches).

Renee Waters of Woodland Hills, California, tells how when she was living and working in New York City 'my room-mates always referred to me as "the Fuse Blower" when I would come home from work, usually irritated by a crowded subway ride, the first light I would put on would "pop" and be burned out. Also other appliances wouldn't turn "on" when I touched them and someone else would have to turn them on. One day the woman in the office next to mine called me over and really made me angry, suddenly all the lights in her office went off and the switch plate was too hot to touch. The maintenance man was baffled because she was on the same circuit as the rest of the offices and only hers went out'.

Mary Anderson tells us that besides the classic street light incidents, 'I often experience interruptions of lights in my home or in other people's homes that seem exactly coincident with something I have said or thought along the lines of psychic phenomena or other related subjects. Also, my car and computer at times seem to be affected, until I direct my subconscious to not leak at them'

Anne de Vore of Central City, Colorado, is one of those who seem to exert SLI on a larger scale : she affects 'electronically sophisticated cars', so she drives 'simple' cars and has to 'coax them along' when they are new, until they get 'used' to her - an observation which may hide a profound truth about the phenomenon. She even believes her abilities extend to aircraft : 'When I fly on airlines, I became aware that the pilot often said there would be a delay to check out an unknown electrical disturbance. If I meditated and shielded myself, in a few minutes the pilot would announce there was no apparent trouble. So I now routinely shield myself with color imagery as I pass through the safety check points and then when I am first on the plane I quiet myself and shield again'.

Several respondents speak of extinguishing complete electrical systems : Mike Monahan of Toledo, Ohio, turned off 'all the power in the store - all lights etc - everything' for about 10 seconds,' and on another occasion he did the same in a sports arena. Coincidence ? Mike has asked himself this, but insists that this sort of thing has happened so often when he's been around, that he feels himself to be responsible.

If Phill Shaw sits next to a radio in tune, 'it will be badly out of tune when I step away. And vice versa. This effect is so pronounced and occurs so frequently that one friend dubbed me "radioactive"'.

Yet there are other SLIders who seem to confine their activities to street lamps. Don Inks, who experiences recurrent SLI, says : 'The weird thing is, I have never had any problem with any other electrical devices (watches, TVs &c) or any other types of lights.' Eric Warp works with computers every day but 'I've never noticed any other electrical disturbances or abnormalities'.

This discrepancy is one of the most baffling aspects of SLI ; it may also prove to be one of our most revealing clues.

Can SLI be done to order?

Almost everyone says No to this, but there are exceptions : Eric Warp was able to induce his neighbor's yard light to turn off by walking past it and concentrating, much to the alarm of his mother-in-law, a devout Catholic.

'My most intense incidents were in the winter of 1984, in Colorado Springs. At the time I was in an unhappy relationship... it was not a high point in my life. My walk to work took about 35 minutes, and in the darkness on the way home I was almost always thinking intensely... One night I was walking past an apartment building and the (mercury vapor) yard light turned off. After I had walked past it a few yards, it sputtered back on. I didn't think much of it until the next night, when the same thing happened. I began to wonder if perhaps I was doing this somehow. I made a game of it - actually concentrating on turning off the light - and found much to my surprise that I could do it consistently. I found that I couldn't turn off just any light, but that one was a snap'.

On a subsequent occasion he found himself turning off street lamps 'five or six at a time' while walking through downtown Colorado Springs. He was feeling particularly angry and frustrated at the time.'

Teri Mudry 'did it once very consciously for my husband'. Ed Pietila of Pewaukee, Wisconsin, tried to do it deliberately while driving with his girlfriend. 'I kept concentrating but none would go out. However, as soon as I "gave up", one went out.'

The 'game-playing' dimension

Ed's account illustrates that the SLI phenomenon sometimes seems to be playing games with the witness. A typical incident is reported by John Spencer : one night in September 1990 he was talking about his two experiences of SLI to a skeptical colleague following a meeting of BUFORA, the British UFO organisation, of which both he and his colleague are officers : 'I was discussing some strange events and Steve was rationalising them to counter my suggestions. As we passed a street light on the corner of the street it suddenly went out. I said to Steve, "Witness that - I have to tell Hilary about this". Steve countered by explaining that it was perfectly normal for street lights to 'rest' for periods and that I should make nothing of it. I did not counter the point (which is probably correct). However, as we together passed the next light in the street. that went out also...'

Although this seems to be just 'fun' it may actually tell us something important about the phenomenon : to go back to Eric Warp's account, for example, surely we can learn something from the fact that the SLI occurred when he stopped concentrating ?

What causes SLI to occur ?

I think we can dispose once and for all of the explanation which most people immediately suggest, that the light-sensing devices on the lamps are being accidentally triggered. Apart from obvious objections such as, if they are so easily triggered, why isn't SLI happening all the time, there are patent contradictions. For example, Dean Slawson tells us that SLI happens with both his cars, but only when he is using them, not when his wife is using them. (We could of course argue that his wife is a different weight from him, so the balance of the car is different, so the car lights would be hitting the lamps

at a different angle... but that would be a rather desperate argument !)

In any case, SLI occurs frequently when the subject is not in a car : **Joan Croft** was walking the dog when 'every single light for one neighbourhood block went out followed by a small explosion and sparks from what I thought was a transformer at the other end of the street'. **David Kozbiel** of Canada had it happen while walking in a park with his girlfriend. **Joseph Langan** says 'it happened when I was walking, driving or riding my bicycle'.

It seems reasonable to suppose that for SLI to occur what is required is a convergence of three elements :

- #1 someone with the necessary **ability**
- #2 the appropriate **circumstances**
- #3 a suitable '**target**'

Let's consider each of these in turn.

#1 With regard to the necessary **ability** we have further options :

- maybe the ability to do SLI may be something we all possess
- maybe only some of us - certain psychological types, perhaps, or with the appropriate biology or bio-electrical make-up - have the ability
- maybe any - or perhaps just some - of us may acquire the ability, temporarily or permanently, if suitable circumstances occur

A puzzling category of SLIders is those who have SLI experiences only once in their lives, or only for a short period : **Harold Butcher** of Cheltenham, England, experienced it only for 4 to 6 weeks, never before and never since.

That the ability may come to someone as the result of a modification to his physiological make-up is a possible interpretation of what happened to **Thomas Meketa**, who never experienced SLI until he had a very severe accident at work involving (electrical) welding apparatus. Since his accident, he has experienced SLI 'at least 100 times' witnessed by friends and relatives.

It seems that pretty well every SLIder who has come to terms with his/her ability and given it some thought has come to much the same conclusion, more or less clearly expressed : that this is a natural human energy field. Some liken it to the healing power which some people possess ; others compare it to the force which makes another person sense you are looking at him. And so on.

Karen Parker believes there may be a connection with the fact that she is 'very static-y. I build up static electricity like crazy. My cats loathe me in the winter when the air is especially dry.' So many accounts contain anecdotes of interaction with other kinds of electrical equipment, that there has to be a connection of some kind. But we mustn't jump to the conclusion that it has to be a cause-and-effect connection : it could be that both are consequences of some other facet of the individual's biological make-up.

Equally, it would be wrong to disregard the feeling that many have, that SLI is in some way associated with 'psi' ability. Many respondents speak of 'psychic' experiences of various kinds : the most frequent is premonitions. **Ronald Brown** is one of several who have told of experiences from childhood on which suggest that SLI is just one among a cluster of unusual abilities.

Martin Curry : 'Once or twice a year, year after year, light bulbs - some virtually brand-new - have come on briefly and then burned out as soon as I flipped on the controlling wall-switch. Moreover, in the majority of instances, I knew, unmistakably, an instant before I touched the switch, that the bulb would burn out'.

#2 With regard to the **circumstances**, the general feeling is that SLI is clearly linked to states of mind : however, there is considerable disagreement as to which states of mind are most likely to cause SLI to occur. **Gwen Mangan** mentions 'anger and terror', but also 'happiness'.

For some, the appropriate mood is concentration. **David Kozbial** : 'Most of the times I have been concentrating on something, like finding a house number, or figuring the shortest route there, or working out some academic problem in my mind'. Yet this seems to be contradicted by **Ronald McFaddin** : 'The effect seems to occur when I am between thoughts'.

For many, the state is one of heightened emotion. **Eric Warp** was having emotional problems with a girlfriend. The earliest experience **Anne de Vore** can recall occurred when she was arguing with her mother. An anonymous witness from London, England, says he is 'angry or tense $\frac{3}{4}$ of the time, worried $\frac{1}{4}$ '.

For **Mary Anderson**, '(SLI) has often been related to times of great stress, but the kind of stress that is prolonged and not acute at any particular point, and which for that reason must be submerged and lived with in order to continue daily functioning on the job, etc. (The kind of anticipatory stress involved with waiting with a loved one who is in the death process over a period of a year or so, for example, or the kind of psychic turmoil which a person undergoes over a long period of time when undergoing a transformation in values, understanding and development. These times are typified by "intensity-lived-with", not necessarily negative in quality.'

And SLI is often associated with more positive states of mind : **Bob Lovely** of Great Falls, Montana, writes : 'Many years ago when I was dating a particular girlfriend this phenomenon took on a more evident effect. This girl lived across town from me and as I began to accelerate along the freeway entrance, each lamp I passed would go out just as I was passing it. This was invariably on evenings that we had had sex. On other evenings some lamps would go out but not like on the ones when our passions had been aroused'. (Interestingly, this is consistent with some psychokinesis reports.)

Don Inks relates his SLI-events to emotions on a different level : 'My experiences started around 17 September 1987. On this day, I had what I can only explain as "a spiritual awakening to my oneness with all in the universe". For seven straight days I experienced a "heightened consciousness". During this week, while driving my much familiar road home from work, street lights would go out as my car would come to stop at intersections... When these incidents take place, I am usually feeling as though spiritually or emotionally I am reaching out in all directions, and at peace. Also, my mind is usually just left to "go where it would", as you might say. These experiences are occurring even now, almost daily - whether I'm walking to my car at night in the parking lot (where they will "wink out" as I pass under them) or when I stop my auto under a street lamp at an intersection'. He emphasises : 'Almost always, I'm at complete peace - serene'.

At the same time, we must take into account that some SLIders have no sense of emotional causation. **Craig Patterson** : 'There is absolutely NO tie-in. Not with moods, circumstances, job, weather, nothing. Completely random.'

Moreover, if there is a tie-in with emotion, it raises the obvious question : why should making love, or spiritual ecstasy, cause someone to interfere with street lamps ? The general feeling is that this is accidental : a kind of random or arbitrary direction of the force in a non-meaningful way. Mary Anderson speaks of psychic energy 'leaking' from her. This seems plausible : if so, we may suppose it is simply the case that certain types of street lamp 'happen' to be on the same 'frequency' as this energy, and so are accidentally affected.

However, we should not exclude the possibility that there is some meaning to it ; that street lamps are a kind of symbolic representation, and that the subconscious 'chooses' them, whether as a deliberate act or, if it has to spill excess energy somewhere, feels that SLI is a more appropriate way to do it than others. Is David Kozbial perhaps offering us a clue when he writes : 'the somehow comic serendipity of the light blinking out in my peripheral vision as I go by has usually served to relieve some of the tension produced by my concentration'.

#3 With regard to the question of **target**, we can be particularly grateful to Ronald Brown, who has analysed the physical parameters of the SLI process. (What follows is a shortened and somewhat simplified version of his fine analysis, which is too lengthy to include here in full ; if anyone would like to contact him direct, though, his address is 125th Place NE / Woodinville / WA 98072-7907 / USA)

* Does SLI involve some kind of built-in response : that is, are street lamps designed to respond to certain environmental factors, and does SLI accidentally duplicate those factors and consequently trigger the response ?

Improbable : it would be ridiculous to design lamps which could be so easily affected. This would be inefficient - the lamps would be frequently failing to do what they were designed to do - and also be costly both in electricity and in wear-and-tear on the lamp.

* Does SLI involve interaction with the photo-electric cell which causes modern street lamps to switch on and off ?

Improbable, because the cell is generally located on top of the lamp, out of sightline for most SLIDERS. In any case, the cell is activated by visible light - its presence or absence : yet SLIders are not reported as emitting visible light in any form.

3 Does SLI involve interruption of the electrical current supply ?

Improbable, because if this were the case, not only would more than one lamp go out at a time, but it would be liable to affect the area supply, including nearby homes and equipment such as traffic lights.

Also, the supply circuit is an alternating current of very high electrical potential, unlikely to be overcome by another force which is likely to be of vastly smaller potential.

Moreover, supply circuits are insulated ; also, being demand-oriented (i.e. responding to the power requirement at any given time) they possess built-in protection against undue surge or reduction, such as may be involved in SLI.

4 Does SLI act on the pressure or quality of the internal gas vapor, or on the internal fluorescent materials ?

Improbable, because such actions would require some time to take effect, whereas the SLI effect seems to be instantaneous.

5 Is there any aspect of the street lamp's operation which seems vulnerable to SLI 'force' ?

Street lamps operate by passing a circuit through gas, which has first to be pre-heated by a starter circuit. Once the gas is warmed up to start-up temperature, the general lamp circuit takes over, and so long as it maintains adequate voltage the lamp will function.

However, if the voltage should drop below a certain point, the lamp's internal resistance will overcome the circuit and the lamp will cease to function. Equally, if the voltage climbs above a critical point, the circuit will kick out so as to protect the lamp from the consequences of operating at too high a voltage. In both cases, the lamp will stay off until re-activated with a current at the correct level. Normally, the circuit is designed to ensure a supply of current safely within the margins, despite such factors as outside temperature, humidity &c.

What is most likely happening, Ronald Brown suggests, is that SLI operates by affecting the voltage of the current ; and it is more likely that it does so by causing a **surge** rather than a **reduction**, with the effect that it triggers the protective automatic cut-out.

What kind of force could do this ? It would have to be an electro-magnetic force, somehow generated within the human biological system, and somehow externalised into the neighbouring environment, where it will act on any appliance which happens to be vulnerable.

These appliances need not be street lamps, of course : the reports we have of persons affecting computers, supermarket check-outs etc are testimony to this. That leaves us wondering how to explain the people who don't affect other apparatus : however, Brown suggests that street lamps may be particularly sensitive, perhaps because they operate within narrow margins where critical levels are easily reached : or because it is not normally considered necessary to give them substantial shielding.

In a series of pieces in the *Omaha World-Herald*, January 12-18 1990, columnist Robert McMorris told of people's SLI experiences and also offered some explanations. He quoted Marge Jachym, of Lighting Specialists Inc, to the effect that : 'As a high-pressure sodium lamp ages, its lamp voltage increases until the ballast can no longer sustain lamp operation. Therefore, the end of life cycling begins. Thus the lamps blink off.' McMorris concludes : 'It's apparently mere coincidence that the lights happen to go out just when people are driving under them'.

I think even the handful of reports cited in this bulletin make it clear that coincidence is inadequate as an explanation. Even if the Jachym suggestion is sound, it seems that some people have the ability to accelerate the process. But in any case it is largely invalidated by the fact that most street lamps come on again perfectly healthily the next day. Clearly, SLI is affecting the lamp's functioning, not the lamp itself.

The 'how' and the 'why' of SLI

There seem to be good reasons to think something along the lines suggested above is the basic process involved ; but the frequent occurrence of the word 'somehow' is an indication of how far we have to go before we can claim to understand the phenomenon. At best, we have perhaps made a start in establishing the **how** of SLI : but the more important question, the **why** of SLI, remains an enigma.

In this connection, Lester Lomax makes an important point : 'That some street lamp systems are "open" to being turned off ... does not necessarily mean that a physical causal hypothesis is the only possibility. Highly labile (= unstable) systems may be more readily influenced by PK, and more readily fit into a synchronicity'.

That SLI may be related to PK on the one hand, and to synchronicity on the other, are two lines we must pursue, even if both concepts have as yet to receive the seal of approval of orthodox science.

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This bulletin contains only a selection from the material which SLIDE has received over the past few months : there is much more - this is only the tip of the iceberg. If so many have responded to the very limited publicity which our project has so far received, we must suppose that there are many thousands of people across the globe who have experienced SLI.

You will notice that most of the reports come from North America : this is because a piece by Dennis Stacy in OMNI September 1990 prompted many readers of that magazine to write. This means that so far, the great majority of SLI reports are from North American readers of OMNI, who may or may not be representative of the population as a whole. I hope we shall soon be getting more input from other parts of the world to see whether this is so.

But not only are there more accounts than those quoted here, there is also more, much more, to those accounts. Reading the bare outlines, which is all there's space for in this bulletin, hardly gives you an idea of the depth and intensity of the experience which individual witnesses have felt. Whatever SLI may be, it is a very human phenomenon, with links to our feelings and states of mind. While on the one hand we investigate the physical process involved in SLI, on the other we must take into account the implications of interaction with the human mind.

Because so much remains to be done, I am for the moment taking a cautious attitude towards the media who, as SLIDE gets to be better known, are beginning to scent an exciting story. At this stage, I feel it wisest to keep a low profile in this respect, as it would be irresponsible to put out ideas about SLI until we are reasonably sure they're the right ideas. On the other hand, I realise that some publicity - the right kind of publicity - could be helpful in that it would bring in more input, both from people who have had SLI experiences and from those who may have useful ideas on the subject.

In due course, when our research has progressed to a suitable point, a more comprehensive report will be published, containing more and fuller accounts, more analysis, and a deeper consideration of the implications. Needless to say, every one of you who have shown an interest in SLIDE will be notified when this happens. In the meantime, we continue to need all the input we can get - accounts of experiences, and ideas about the phenomenon.

My sincere thanks to all of you who have responded, whether or not you are quoted here.

Helen Lang